

College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University

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CONFIDENTIAL
LETTER OF REFERENCE

October 14, 1985

Dear Doctor Kappas:

I am replying to your request for an evaluation of the qualifications of Dr. Ronald Crystal to head a new clinical research group at The Rockefeller University Hospital. I have known Ron for approximately twelve years at which time he was brought by Claude Lenfant to head a section in pulmonary biochemistry at the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. He became the overall head of the pulmonary branch of the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute in 1975. Ron came to this position from a good background of clinical training in internal medicine which he had obtained at The Massachusetts General Hospital.

His early interest in biochemistry was in hemoglobin biosynthesis but moved shortly to collagen synthesis and structure and particularly in the lung. These early directions which were concerned with lung disease and collagen content and composition set the stage for a most productive subsequent ten years which produced an array of studies devoted to cellular and tissue pathogenic mechanisms in lung disease. A great strength of Ron's approach has been his ability to attract many very talented and productive young trainees to the lung division of the N.I.H. Ron has directed and trained these individuals and several have now gone on to direct pulmonary divisions in universities around the country. In such a category I would mention Gary Hunninghake, James Gadek, James Fulmer and Peter Bitterman. It is clear that Ron is capable of developing an exciting clinical research environment and to direct and supervise young investigators into productive lines of research.

Among the most important scientific contributions coming from that laboratory which have influenced the field I would list: 1. The demonstration of bronchoalveolar lavage as a useful means to study the immune cellular reactions of the lung in interstitial fibrosis. 2. The development of useful hypotheses concerning the lymphocyte abnormalities in sarcoidosis. 3. The demonstration of the practicality of replacement of alpha 1 antiprotease at regular intervals in PiZZ deficient patients. 4. Studies reinforcing the concept of an imbalance between elastase activity in the lung and elastase inhibition as the major pathogenic mechanisms in the development of pulmonary emphysema.

Ron personally is a delightful, original and thoughtful person although at the same time hard driving and competitive in his work. I believe he is clearly one of the best qualified in the United States to establish a clinical research unit in lung disease at The Rockefeller University. I believe the combined strength of his sharp clinical insights into lung disease and his firm base in connective tissue chemistry and cellular mechanisms of injury in the lung have set the stage for many productive years to come.

I give him my strongest recommendation for an appointment to such a position at Rockefeller University.

Sincerely yours,

Gerard M. Turino

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